# St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Staff

Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. 904 East Lake Avenue, Peoria Heights, IL 61616 stthomaspeoria.org; 309-688-3446 parishoffice@stthomas-church.net

Pastor: Msgr. Jason A. Gray.....(x3) msgrgray@stthomas-church.net

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Leopold Mushobozi.. (x4)

Fr\_Leo@stthomas-church.net

Priest in Residence: Fr. Patrick

DeMeulemeester OSF Chaplain

Sacristan: Mother Vaclava Ballon, FSJB

(688-3500); fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com

Deacon: Dcn. John Nelson......981-2716

Dcn. Ed Mallow......360-7735 Dcn. Mark Kelsch (Senior Status)

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steveharms@stthomas-church.net

Annulment Consultant:

John Mackoway......699-5213

St. Vincent de Paul Society HelpLine.....(309) 264-5815

### Stay in Touch

- Join Msgr. Gray for OCIA Class. Link can be found on the parish website, stthomaspeoria.org or the My Parish App
- Download My Parish App to receive push notifications (Visit myparishapp.com/download).
- Receive the Bulletin and announcements in weekly emails from the parish. (Email parishoffice@ stthomas-church.net to sign up).
- 4. Bookmark the parish webpage (stthomaspeoria.org).



# December 14, 2025 Third Sunday of Advent





### From Our Pastor

With the third Sunday of Advent we are getting closer to the final novena on our way to the Nativity of Our Lord. The Church saves the stories from the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke for the final nine days before Christmas. For this reason, we have delayed putting up many of the Christmas decorations, including the nativity scene, until this latter part of Advent. Now that the day is growing closer and the lights of the Advent wreath are becoming brighter, we look forward with greater anticipation to the joy of the birth of Jesus.

We hold our traditional Open House this weekend to celebrate as a parish and to honor all those who have volunteered their time and energy at St. Thomas this past year. Please join us after all Masses this weekend to celebrate with more festive joy. Thank you to those who have decorated and planned this weekend's refreshments.

St. Thomas School will have many of our holiday activities this week before the Christmas break begins. For many of us, we will also have many social and family activities that will require our attention. While we look forward to these activities and celebrate with joy at this time of the year, let us keep our Lord before our eyes.

With all humility, we hear the call of St. John the Baptist and earnestly seek to repent in order to prepare our hearts. Please note the added confession times after all weekend Masses this weekend and next weekend.

- -Msgr. Gray

# Pray with the Pope

December 2025
For Christians in Areas of Conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.





## Readings for the Week of December 14, 2025

Sunday Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10; James 5: 7-10; Matthew 11: 2-11

**Monday** Numbers 24: 2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21: 23-27

**Tuesday** Zephaniah 3: 1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21: 28-32

Wednesday Genesis 49: 2, 8-10; Matthew 1: 1-17

**Thursday** Jeremiah 23: 5-8; Matthew 1: 18-25

**Friday** Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1: 5-25

**Saturday** Isaiah 7: 10-14; Luke 1: 26-38

Sunday Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7: 10-14; Romans 1: 1-7; Matthew 1: 18-24

### **Mass Intentions**

Monday, December 15, 2025

7:00 a.m. Jack & Mary Pat Berge/Dave McCauley 8:00 a.m. Bob & Rose Sullivan/Peggy Sullivan

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

7:00 a.m. Souls in Purgatory/Tam & Phan Vu 8:00 a.m. Paul Hop Nguyen/Mai Dang

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

7:00 a.m. Eugene J Maushard/Family 8:00 a.m. Norman Stahl/Nancy Becker

Thursday, December 18, 2025

7:00 a.m. Lois Frasco/Linda Osika Sch Mass Mary Ann O'Neill/Family

Friday, December 19, 2025

7:00 a.m. Tho Dang/Tan Tran

8:00 a.m. Angela Kenny/Katy Mitchell

Saturday, December 20, 2025

8:00 a.m. Terry Walke/Mai Dang

5:00 p.m. Thomas Penn/David & Laurie Williams

Sunday, December 21, 2025

8:00 a.m. Truyen Nguyen/Linh Luong

10:00 a.m. Intentions of Ed & Cathy Mallow's God children

5:00 p.m. For the People

### Week of December 14

**PARISH OPEN HOUSE** December 13/14 following Saturday 5:00 p.m. and all Sunday Masses

**EXTRA CONFESSIONS** Sunday, December 14, following all Masses

CHRISTMAS BAND CONCERT Monday, December 15, 6:30 p.m., School

ROSARY Tuesday, December 16, 10:00 a.m., Chapel

CCD Wednesday, December 17, 6:00 p.m., School

OCIA Wednesday, December 17, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

SIMBANG GABI MASS Thursday, December 18, 6:00 p.m., Church

WOMEN OF THE WORD Thursday, December 18, 6:30 p.m., Parish Hall

ST. THOMAS HOLY HOUR Thursday, December 18, 7:00 p.m., Church

**MEN'S CLUB CHRISTMAS** Thursday, December 18, 6:30 p.m., Sullivan's in the Heights

CHURCH CLEANING Saturday following 8:00 a.m. Mass, Church

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Millions of Monicas
TMIY Resumes

December 23 January 23



**Advent Confessions** Before Christmas confession times include:

Saturday, Nov. 29; Dec. 6, 13, & 21, 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 23 & 30; Dec. 7, 14, & 20, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Masses will be offered Dec. 24, Christmas Eve at 5:00, 7:00, and 10:00 p.m. and Dec 25, Christmas Day at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

## **Weekly Collection**

December 7, 2025

		Fiscal YTD
Collections needed	\$20,400	\$469,200
Sunday Collections	\$19,639	\$301,064
Electronic Collections	\$13,051	\$146,549
Total Collected	\$32,690	\$447,613
Over/(Short)	\$12,290	\$(21,587)

Your support of St. Thomas Parish is important to sustain our mission. Please remember to contribute regularly with your envelopes or checks in our regular Sunday collection. Electronic contributions can be made through direct debit, or by using the Giving tab on our parish website: stthomaspeoria.org. Thank you for your support.

## **Our Sympathy**

Ron Przyborowski, cousin of Michele & Sarah Konecki

### **Baptism Congratulations**

Lillian Flowers, daughter of Jessica & Karl Flower

Addison Duarte, daughter of Yaritza & Jesus Duarte



# BECOME ONE OF THE MILLIONS OF MONICAS

One Hour One Purpose Our Children

4<sup>TH</sup> TUESDAYS 7-8 PM ST. THOMAS, PEORIA HEIGHTS

Join with other mothers as we pray to grow in holiness and humility and for our children's faithful return to the Catholic Church

Sponsor of the Week





# Ohristmas Open House

A THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT ALL YEAR LONG

> SATURDAY DECEMBER 13 SUNDAY DECEMBER 14 AFTER ALL MASSES

PLEASE JOIN US IN THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE CHURCH



### **OCIA Schedule**

Dec 10: Orders, Religious Life

Dec 17: Marriage Dec 24: No Class Dec 31: No Class

Jan 7: Liturgical year, Church tour, Mass practice Jan 14: Great Commandments; Divine/Natural Law;

Commandment 1

# Food Pantry Family Advent Calendar of Giving

In the spirit of the preparation of our hearts for the coming of our Savior, here is a meaningful way to share our treasures with neighbors who are struggling with food insufficiency. Place one food item in a box each day from December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 24<sup>th</sup>. When the box is complete, bring it to the church as a donation to the food pantry. The items below are representative of the canned goods each food pantry family receives each month.

Merry Christmas to you and yours from the Food Pantry!

12/1 Mac and Cheese 12/2 Mac and Cheese

12/3 Bag of Rice

12/4 Boxed Side Dish

12/5 Box of Cereal 12/6 Box of Saltines

12/7 Can of Meat

12/8 Pasta Sauce 12/9 Can of Fruit

12/10 Can of Fruit

12/11 Peanut Butter
12/12 Skillet Dinner Kit



12/13 Dry Pasta

12/14 Can of Soup 12/15 Can of Soup

12/16 Can of Veggies

12/17 Can of Veggies 12/18 Can of Veggies

12/19 Can of Veggies 12/20 Can of Veggies

12/21 Bag of Dried Beans

12/22 Jelly

12/23 Can of Chili or Stew 12/24 Box of Cereal Bars

### St. Thomas - Food Pantry

Items needed at this time are: Rice, Mac and Cheese, Crackers, Pasta Sauce, Cereal, Canned Meat, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Fruit and Vegetables, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Canned or Dry Beans (Legumes), Hamburger/Chicken/Tuna Helper

Thank you!

## The Sheen Experience

More than just a tribute....

The Sheen Experience offers an inspiring, interactive look at the life, faith, and legacy of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen. Through storytelling, artifacts, and multimedia, visitors are invited to encounter his profound impact on the Church and the world in a fresh and engaging way.

Watch the Sheen Experience <u>The Experience</u> — Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Foundation

# Administrative Assistant – Diocese of Peoria

Seeking a detail-oriented Administrative Assistant to support the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools. Duties include answering phones, event support, recordkeeping, and general office operations. Must be professional, organized, proficient in Microsoft Office/Google Workspace, and supportive of the Church's mission. For further information, go to https://www.applitrack.com/cdop/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Curia.

### Advent Resources

Catholic Relief Services offers a Prayer Service for blessing the Advent wreath and lighting the candles during the four Sundays of Advent. A Prayer and Reflection Guide can be found below. Please add the prayers and reflections in your bulletin each week.

These resources from Catholic Relief Services are shared by the Peoria Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Care for Creation Committee

View the full Advent Resource Guide: 54d51c9a-f266-47a4-b768-f43186d44365.docx

#### December 2025



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Soon, our parishes will participate in the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection. This important annual appeal benefits more than 20,500 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who have dedicated their lives in service to the Church.

These faithful servants have long been a source of inspiration and support in our communities. I am personally grateful for the religious who helped shape my own faith journey. Perhaps, you too, have known and elderly sister, brother, or religious order priest whose quiet dedication, prayerful presence, or selfless acts left a lasting impression on your life.

Today, the challenges many of these senior religious and their communities face in meeting their retirement needs are greater than ever. Most received little to no pay for their service, and their communities struggle to cover the rising health care expenses and the increasing cost of day-to-day eldercare. The financial burdens continue to grow, and the need is urgent.

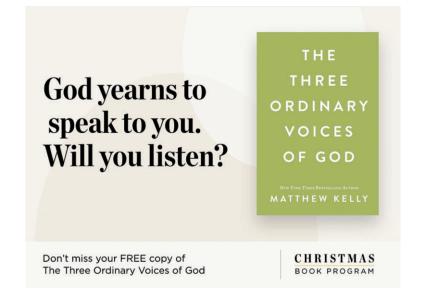
Gifts to the Retirement Fund for Religious make a real, tangible difference to these many women and men religious. Contributions directly support their ongoing care today and help ensure that their communities can plan wisely for their future.

I know you are asked to support many worthy causes, and I thank you for the many ways you give. Please consider making a gift to this year's collection if you are able—and continue to pray for all our elderly religious. They also remember us daily in their prayers.

May God bless you and your loved ones abundantly with peace and health.

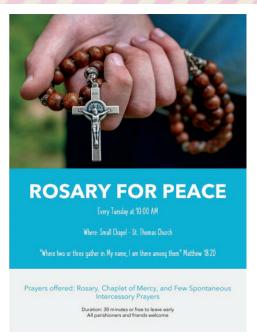
Sincerely yours in Christ,

◆Most Reverend Louis Tylka Bishop of Peoria











# Simbang Gabi Masses



#### 2025 Simbang Gabi Masses:

Sunday, December 14, 5:30pm: Cathedral of St. Mary, Peoria (Father Bill Miller) Monday, December 15, 6pm: St. Mark, Peoria (Bishop Louis Tylka) Tuesday, December 16, 6pm: St. Monica, East Peoria (Father Matt Deptula) Wednesday, December 17, 5:30pm: St. Vincent, Peoria (Father Willard) Thursday, December 18, 6pm: St. Thomas, Peoria Heights (Monsignor Gray) Friday, December 19, 6pm: St. Jude, Peoria (Father Jack Watt) Saturday, December 20, 6:30pm: Blessed Sacrament, Morton (Father Achilleus) Sunday, December 21, 5pm: St. Anthony, Peoria (Father Charles Klamut)

Monday, December 22, 5pm: Holy Family, Peoria (Father Greg Jozefiak)



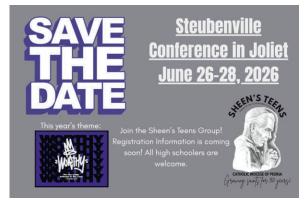




# **Parish Registration**

Complete this form and drop it in the collection basket, or mail to the Parish Office or Register on our website at sthomaspeoria.org. Under

New Parishioner	Change of address/phone
Phone	
City	ZIP
Address	
Phone	
Email	
First Name(s)	Mr Mrs Ms
Last Name	
form.	nioner Registration, complete and submit the





### Explore our Five Foundations with Bishop Lou

We are delighted to share with you a new series available through the Hallow app: The Five Foundations, led by Bishop Lou.

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How to Submit Bulletin Information Send information for the bulletin to parishoffice@stthomas-church.net with subject Bulletin.

Submissions are due by Friday noon, one full week prior.

Send images or logos separately as attachments.

Submissions may be edited for content and length. Please, DO NOT send PDFs.

Sacrament of Baptism

Parents participate in a Baptism class before the Baptism of their first child. Contact the Parish Office to schedule the class.

Confessions Saturday 4:00-4:45pm &

6:00 p.m.-until last confession heard.

### **Parish Office Hours**

The Parish Office is open Monday-Friday from **9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** Staff are also available by email or voicemail. To leave a message, call 309-688-3446, and at the prompt, press:

- 3 Msgr. Gray
- 0 Tracey Administrative Assist.
- 1341 Sheris—Finance & Tuition
- 1310 Kate—Faith Formation
- 1301 Peggy—Bulletin

If you have items to deliver for the Parish Office, you are welcome to put them through the mail slot of the Office downstairs in the Church, or under the door of the main Sacristy upstairs. The Church is open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every day.



# St. Thomas the Apostle's Sunday Bulletin



You are invited to help support our Parish! For opportunities to advertise, please call 800-783-1623







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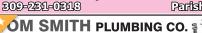


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